



## Monument Manor Neighborhood Association

PO Box 892 • Joshua Tree, CA 92252

www.monumentmanorneighborhood.com

### Monument Manor Neighborhood Association

#### Virtual Annual Meeting on Zoom – March 19, 2022

#### Minutes

#### **Minutes approved at 2023 meeting**

Attendance in-person – Bobby Furst, Dan Stork, Linda Doyle, Bob Kaplan, Terrysa Guerra, Geary Hund, Terry Stone, Diane Kuntz, Chris Crow, Eva Montville, Caroline Conway, Mark Walsh, Will Harner, Paul Sutton, Mark Wheeler, Roberta Meyers, Mike Michelin, Supt. David Smith, Eugene Moisa, Bill Gilman, Deann Favre, Sally Hirsch, Sean Molina, Faith Molina, Celine Molina, Jesse Ditson, Ren Rossini, Mark Campbell, Chris Hanley.

Attendance on Zoom – Mark Soden, Kevin Powell, Geary Hund, Daniel Brenner, Robert Morris, Marsha Collins, Randy Melton, Jen Gagner, Diane Vieau, Steev Beeson, Malissa Daniel, Jill Fraser, Brian Rennie, Rick Booth, Marisa Giesey, Mary Ann Kelly, Todd Snider Rulz, Troy Gatchell, Juan Gerscovich, Diane Thornburgh, Frank Paul, Nick Orenstein, Mary Cox, Chris, Randy Weiss.

Dan Stork set the stage for how the in-person and zoom portion of the meeting will take place. People on zoom will direct their questions to “Chat box” and Geary Hund will forward the comments to the in-person group. Questions from the audience will be repeated by Dan Stork.

#### **1. Welcome and Introductions – Bill Gilman (MMNA President)**

Bill called meeting to order and welcomed everyone. We are holding the meeting both in-person and on Zoom due to continued COVID restrictions. Proof of vaccinations and booster required to attend in-person meeting. No masks were required. Attendees introduced themselves. Bill Gilman gave a special thank you to Will Harner for dragging our roads after every rain storm and Mike & Denise McKay for their efforts to make repairs to the roads after the July 30, 2021 rainstorms. Big thanks to Bobby Furst for hosting the in-person annual meeting. Welcome to new neighbors.

#### **2. Approval of Minutes 2021 Annual Meeting – Bill Gilman**

Bill asked if there were any questions about 2021 draft minutes? None were asked. Bill asked if anyone had any changes needed to draft minutes? Bobby Furst made motion to approve 2021 annual meeting minutes. Motion was seconded by Paul Sutton. All in favor and motion passes. No objections. Bill Gilman thanked Linda Doyle for her work.

**To do:** Linda Doyle will post approved 2021 minutes on MMNA website. **Done ✓**

#### **3. Supt. David Smith (Joshua Tree National Park) presentation & questions – Daniel Brenner**

Bill Gilman introduced Daniel Brenner, At-Large board member. Daniel introduced himself and described his role as the liaison between MMNA and JTNP. Any concerns, please reach out to Daniel at: [mmnajtnp@gmail.com](mailto:mmnajtnp@gmail.com). Daniel then introduced David Smith who in turn introduced Eugene Moisa, NPS working with Supt. Smith on West Entrance.

Supt. Smith was pleased that there were citizens in this community interested in learning more about the park. He said that several issues were happening in the park:

- (1) Fire is a constant concern and JTNP has two fire engines responsible for fires in the park. This year JTNP will also be home to a new crew of all Women's Fire Crew.
- (2) Bighorn Sheep pneumonia in the park – as a way to help the bighorn sheep be less stressed and possibly better fight out pneumonia, JTNP is increasing water flow to certain guzzlers inside the park.
- (3) New bike trail will be built in coming years inside the park (roughly from Quail Springs parking lot to Pinto Wye (Park Blvd in the park and Pinto Basin Rd). Bike trail will not be on current road but on inside shoulder protected from traffic.
- (4) Cottonwood Visitor Center remodel continues to move forward.
- (5) The environmental assessment for the new West Entrance station is being done.

Supt. Smith addressed some of the questions neighbors had about the new station:

- (a) JTNP cannot put the new station one-mile further into the park because of the natural curves of the road. The new station needs a straight road and the next possible area is 2-miles further into the park and this would cost a lot more money.
- (b) Concerns about the glare from the solar panels to be installed on the new station. Smith said the solar panels tilt to the south and, therefore, should not be an issue for neighbors in Monument Manor.
- (c) Water lines will need to be installed to the new station.
- (d) No power lines will be installed to new station because cost was too great. The relocated entrance station will be powered by solar, with natural gas back-up.
- (e) Smith indicated that proposal for the new West Entrance Station has been submitted to his boss. Once his boss signs off on the project, they will send out for bids for construction. He believes construction will start late summer.
- (f) Some neighbors were concerned about traffic once construction starts. However, Smith said that they are going to create two temporary lanes up at the new station location that diverts traffic around the on-going construction in the park and that the existing West Entrance Station will operate as is until construction is finished. Then the temporary lanes will be removed and incorporated into the new entrance design.
- (g) Neighbors were concerned about activity at the existing bathroom by the West Entrance Station. Smith had not heard that this was a problem. But, Sean Molina (Monument Manor neighbor) who lives by the entrance said that it happens every night. Smith introduced Eugenne Moisa, JTNP staff in charge of weekend staffing of the West Entrance Station. Smith asked Moisa if he could follow-up with the issue of night time bathroom activity. They may need to install a camera.
- (h) Parking on Quail Springs in front of homes just before the entrance to the park. He says that he legally has no control over what people do on Quail Springs Rd. That is San Bernardino County jurisdiction. We should reach out to Supervisor Dawn Rowe with our concerns.
- (i) Speeding on Quail Springs. He also has no control over the speed limit on Quail Springs. Smith thinks 55MPH is too fast but he can't change that. This is also something San Bernardino County would need to change.

Supt. Smith then opened it up for questions.

- Brian Rennie (Quail Springs Rd) asked about moving the JTNP sign. Smith said that is going to be tough to move the sign and has no quick solutions to move it. Mr. Rennie indicated that he has reached out to Supervisor Dawn Rowe and stated that she was surprised that the sign hasn't been moved and didn't see the problem with moving it. Smith shared that we may need to reach out others (senator and congress-person) who represent us to help us move the sign.
- Juan Gerscovich (Wagon Wheel Rd) asked about health of Joshua trees. Smith indicated that one concern is that there are very few juvenile Joshua trees being reproduced inside the park due to weather & climate issues. They are seeing juvenile Joshua trees higher up in elevation. Smith also mentioned that they are very aware of needing to protect Joshua trees from fire and lightning strikes. So, they have created firebreaks throughout the park. He mentioned that our dirt roads in the Manor would serve a similar function. Smith said more importantly is the need to remove exotic grasses from Monument Manor (that can increase fire size and fire spread).
- Sean Molina (Rainbow Ridge) brought the issue of traffic backup at the West Entrance. He calls the station to ask them to "flush" the line but has recently encountered negative attitudes from one particular young man in the station. He does not know his name. Smith said this rude behavior should never happen. Smith reminded everyone that they are working to decrease the traffic line and have started putting staff outside with a computer tablet to help people buy passes to speed up the line. They are also asking people to go to the Visitor Center in downtown Joshua Tree to buy their passes. One problem is from the West Entrance Station the staff cannot tell how long the line of cars is. Smith indicated that they will discuss putting a camera on someone's property that could help West Entrance Station staff visually see the problem and not rely on neighbors to let them know of the

traffic build-up. Linda Doyle brought up a public health/safety issue and stated that when the traffic was back up to Lobo Pass Rd that there was a fire truck and ambulance stuck in the traffic line. Smith thought they should be able to work with the County Sheriff's office and the Joshua Tree Fire Department, asking them to contact the West Entrance Station when they have a call in the Manor on Quail Springs and then the staff could "flush" the line to make easy access for public safety vehicles.

- **Maryann Kelly** asked Supt. Smith if Monument Manor neighbors could give JTNP baby Joshua trees for transplant inside the park. Unfortunately, this won't work because the trees are location specific.

Supt. Smith thanked Monument Manor Neighborhood Association for the opportunity to address common issues between Monument Manor and JTNP. If neighbors have more questions, they should send an email to Daniel Brenner (MMNA At-Large Board Member) at: [mmnajtnp@gmail.com](mailto:mmnajtnp@gmail.com).

**4. Treasurer's Report – Dan Stork (MMNA Treasurer)** Dan showed treasurer's report as of March 19, 2022.

	2021 (full year)	2022 (to date)
Beginning balance January 1	\$7912.97	\$19506.76
Ending balance	\$19506.76	\$25,393.34
Cash contributions ( <b>before</b> PayPal fees)	\$27,810.00	\$12,745.00
Number of cash contributors	107	60
Participation rate	48%	28% (it's early)
PayPal and/or Zelle contributors	54	25
Road labor	\$6740.00	\$3680.00
Dirt	\$5250.00	
Road signs		\$2618.91
Total road expense	\$11,990.00	\$6298.91
Liability insurance	\$1696.60	Due mid-year
PayPal fees	\$522.37	\$241.80
Misc. expenses (PO Box rental, Zoom)	\$441.65	\$182.00
Incorporation costs	\$1,877.65	
Contributed expenses by officers	\$258.99	\$209.70
Total expenses	\$17,084.25	\$6932.41

Notes

1. Mean contribution in 2021 (per contributor) was \$259.91. Median and mode contribution were each \$100. The discrepancy between mean and median was due to a couple of large donations, including \$5000 from Apple TV+ in December, 2021. There was another \$5000 donation from Apple TV+ in January, 2022
2. Post-monsoon appeal resulted in 38 donations, totaling \$8190. Almost all of these were from parties who had contributed earlier in the year.
3. There were 149 separate donations from 107 individuals in 2021.
4. 48% participation rate in 2021 matched 2020, & is highest rate for those years for which data is known (back to 2006).
5. About half of "incorporation costs" was IRS penalty, resulting from over-six-week gap between being granted state incorporation & state informing us of that action. Penalty was paid to avoid IRS attachment of assets & is under appeal.
6. Federal tax-exempt status under section 501(c)4 of IRS code were expected by early February, 6 months after submission of application. This did not happen, and IRS has been unreachable by phone & is unresponsive to mailings. IRS has sent MMNA multiple notices, each saying that they will need another 60 days to answer correspondence.
7. It should be noted that (a) this status, when achieved, will formally exempt MMNA from Federal taxes, and (b) contributions to a 501(c)4 organization are NOT in general tax-deductions for the donor. Contributors are advised to consult their tax advisors as to whether exceptions exist.
8. MMNA officers contributed expenses for mailings, web site, domain name, printing.
9. Dan reminded everyone that donations are not tax deductible.

**Discussion:** Will Harner asked if there a limit to how much funds we can have in the MMNA bank account. Dan Stork reminded the group that we are okay with regard to being able to file a minimal and tax-free return as long as our revenues are under \$50,000.

Dan Stork was thanked for his efforts.

## **5. President's Report – Bill Gilman**

Thank you and Welcome! Thank you to all the members of MMNA who contributed time, funds, and resources to help keep our neighborhood in great shape this past year.

1. A special thank you to Will Harner, who has dedicated his time and effort to drag our roads after rainstorms for many years. This maintenance is extremely important in keeping our roads.
2. We'd also like to thank Mike and Denise McKay (Uphill Rd.) for their efforts after July 30<sup>th</sup> rainstorm. They spent money out of their own pocket to make grading & berm repairs to the roads at corner of Uphill and Singletree.

Welcome to all of our new neighbors!

### **Change of Insurance Provider & Policy**

After our previous insurance agent changed companies, we were trying to get questions answered about the actual type of coverage that we had, in particular confirming that if any damage to property occurred as a result of the work being done on the roads by our vendors or volunteers. We had trouble getting information from that company, so I recommended we get a quote from Ambere St. Rose from Crimson Insurance, who specializes in some more uncommon types of insurance, like ours is. Her quote came in less than our previous provider, and confirmed the type of coverage we needed, unlike the other quote. It made for a pretty easy decision. So, we switched insurance companies and are now covered by Crimson Insurance.

### **Mailbox Availability**

There are no security mailboxes available in cluster box unit at corner of Quail Springs Rd. and Uphill Rd. If you would like to place your name on waiting list for a mailbox, please contact Linda Doyle ([Lsdoyle@earthlink.net](mailto:Lsdoyle@earthlink.net)). There is \$100 non-refundable deposit to rent a box, and you will be provided with three keys (MMNA does not retain a key to your mailbox).

### **Acknowledgment of Passing and Moment of Silence**

As has been the custom for the past few years, we will dedicate a moment of silence at the 2022 annual meeting to observe and honor the memory of those neighbors we lost this past year. Please join us in remembering these friends and neighbors:

- Ceci Harner (Will Harner's wife) June 29, 2021 - Doggie Trail
- George Fisler, PhD (Janis Fisler's husband) - March 11, 2021 - Rincon
- Lupe Molina (Sean Molina's mother) Dec 22, 2021 - Rainbow Ridge

We have also included these departed friends and neighbors on the memorial page of MMNA's website:

<https://www.monumentmanorneighborhood.com/in>. If you know of any other neighbor, past or present, who passed away and is not listed above, please let us know. We will add them to the list of those being remembered in the moment of silence and to MMNA's memorial webpage.

### **Alt Shelters Dwellings Short Term Rental County Ordinance**

We recently learned from Cat Celebrezze, of the Whitefeather ALT community group, that: The County recently put in place a new special use permitting process for alternative shelter rentals that allows people to rent out "alt shelters" like yurts, tents, and trailers with port-a-potties as "sanitary provision". This permitting process is separate from the Short Term Rental ordinance and was implemented by Land Use Services without public input. Because of strong vocal opposition, the County has suspended the interim ordinance pertaining to trailers, yurts and tents. If you go to the Short Term Rentals FAQ website now, it says permits for alternative structures "cannot be issued at this time".

We also learned from Cat Celebrezze that:

- Supervisor Rowe is against the interim "Alt Shelters" ordinance.
- Opposition has kicked up an internal discussion within the Board of Supervisors about whether or not the Land Use Services Director actually has the legal authority to "back door" such an interim permitting process, without public comment or input from the Board. There are internal discussions happening and it may be that it was never legal in the first place.

- Cat Celebrezze also learned that HipCamp is lobbying HARD. According to Supervisor Rowe's office they are on top of San Bernardino Land Use Services and talking to the various Supervisors' offices all the time.
- Although Supervisor Rowe is against the interim ordinance, there are other members of the Board who have privately expressed support for it.
- It's more than likely that the issue will be brought up again, this time for public comment, either by way of a public survey or a public meeting. Cat Celebrezze has asked Supervisor Rowe's office to keep the community informed. Stay tuned for ways to get involved!

### **Dark Skies Initiative**

You might have seen the awareness postcard that we sent to the Manor residents. It was designed by Diane Kuntz. Funds to cover the printing were donated by Geary Hund, and postage stamps were donated by Mike Michelin. Other neighbors helped apply the labels and stamps. We are fortunate to still have fairly dark skies for viewing stars in the Monument Manor. Most of our residents are aware of the dark sky zone and appreciate our dark skies. It helps that we are close to the park — which in 2017 was designated as an International Dark Sky Park. Newer residents might not be aware of the harm that artificial light at night does to the environment as well... including disturbing the nocturnal sleep patterns of animals. Please be a good neighbor and do your part by turning OFF lights or at least minimizing light's harmful effects by shielding and pointing lights downward. **Bobby Furst** asked a question of Dark Skies park designation. He wondered if anyone knew Tom O'Key who was involved in getting Joshua Tree National Park it's Dark Skies designation. Dan Stork asked if Bobby Furst would reach out to Tom O'Key. Bobby agreed. **Caroline Conway** also stated that the Morongo Basin Conservation Association is another great resource for this topic.

### **Why I'm Stepping Down as President – Bill Gilman**

I will not be running for the position of president for the upcoming year, instead hoping for an At-Large position concentrating on short term rental issues.

### **Election of Officers for 2020-2021 Term**

There are five positions on the MMNA board. Each position holds a one-year term. Any individual who owns or rents property in Monument Manor may run for a seat on the MMNA board. You can identify yourself as a candidate or nominate someone else as a candidate prior to the annual meeting. Three of the five current board members are running for re-election to the same positions they currently hold

- President: Any nominee
- Vice president: Any nominee
- Treasurer: Dan Stork; Any nominee
- Secretary: Linda Doyle; Any nominee
- Roads chair: Geary Hund; Any nominee

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to improve the lives of neighbors living in Monument Manor! It has been my privilege to serve.

### **6. Road & Sign Report – Geary Hund**

Due to virtually no winter rain in 2020 and the roads holding up quite well after a 1.1-inch storm earlier this winter due to preventative maintenance, the roads remained in good condition in the winter months. However, a major monsoon on July 30, 2021, wreaked havoc, temporarily turning our roads into raging rivers of water. Damage was extensive. There was substantial erosion in steep areas and sand deposition in more level areas. Repairs and sand removal took well over a month due to the extent of the damage and the limited availability of tractor operators. Another development was the price of compactable soil – soil must contain a wide range of particle sizes to compact well. Sand does not work for repairs for this reason. The cost per load, about 17 cubic yards, increased to \$350 dollars, from \$250 just two years ago. To help speed up repairs in the future, we are going to contact additional equipment operators to be on standby if our primary contractor has other commitments that result in delays. However, the demand for equipment operators after storms is very high, so there still could be some delay in completing all needed repairs after major storms. Preventative measures, such as the installation of drainage features, will continue to reduce storm damage.

Another major event that affected our roads was the Apple TV shoot on Doggie Trail. The number of vehicle trips and the hauling of large equipment and portable buildings resulted in substantial damage to Uphill and portions of Doggie Trail and Rocking Chair. As the production was wrapping up, with support of the rest of the board, I contacted the location manager and requested that Apple pay for the necessary repairs to the roads. They agreed. As a result, we were able to significantly

improve portions of Uphill, a net gain, and to repair damage to the road shoulders. The cost of the repairs was approximately 9,600 dollars. The persons hosting the shoot (Steve Halterman and Glen Steigelman) also secured 10,000 dollars in donations from Apple TV that will be used for road repairs throughout the Manor.

Regarding signage, we have ordered 25 speed limit signs. These will be used to replace some existing signs and to place signs on roads where there is currently no posted speed limit. We agreed last year at the annual meeting that we would maintain the existing speed limits on two main collector roads, Uphill and Single Tree, at 20 mph, but that we would post the other roads at 15 mph. The exception is Turtle, a main road, but one which has been posted 15 mph in the past – we will maintain that limit.

We will be looking for volunteers to help install the signs. We will be forming teams of 2 for their installation. I will provide a demo on the day we begin the project. A level, post hole digger or post pounder, a shovel, and a strong back (or two) will be needed for each team – the Manor may be able to provide the necessary tools, but volunteers who can provide them will help save costs.

In addition to speed limit signs, we are looking at acquiring some standard folding road barricades to place in eroded areas after storms, to place in areas where repair work is in progress and on Uphill, where visitors frequently try to bypass the line into the National Park. We will be looking at custom signs to place on the barricades.

We may also be forming a work party to create a rock swale on either side of one of the rolling dips on Uphill to prevent storm damage and erosion. Stay tuned for date announcements, but feel free to contact me to express your interest in the meantime.

We have prepared a scope of work to complete needed repairs and Sean Molina and I did a “job walk” yesterday. We should be receiving a bid to do the work soon. The work includes repairs on Turtle and t/o the neighborhood.

In closing, we sometimes go for long periods without a storm. It can give the impression as our coffers grow that the Association has plenty of funds. However, one or two major storms a year can empty our accounts very quickly. Also, we continue to make improvements, which cost money in the short run, but which reduce future storm damage. I encourage you all to go be as generous as you can in making donations, and to educate neighbors who may not donate about the good work that we do that ensures that our roads remain passable and in good shape. Thank you.

Geary thanked Sean Molina for his work on our roads.

Signage – 25 speed limit signs and posts and replace existing signs and install new signs. 20MPH. otherwise we would post 15MPH. turtle will stay at 15MPH.

- Bobby Furst indicated that a sign limit sign on Desert Shadows has gone missing and needs to be replaced with a 15MPH sign for Desert Shadows. Geary agreed.
- We need volunteers to help install the signs. Volunteers could help offset costs if they used their own tools. We are also buying barricades.
- Work party to create a rock swale on uphill.
- Bobby Furst has an auger that can be used/borrowed. Sean mentioned we should be careful about the type of tools we used to install the posts for the signs, and that a power auger risks damaging buried utility lines.

In closing, one or two major storms can empty our road fund account very quickly. Encouraged everyone to donate. Also reach out to your neighbors.

Sean Molina – wanted to thank Geary for his work on the roads.

## **7. Amended bylaws – Dan Stork**

Dan described the proposed change in the bylaws increasing pre-authorization for road expenses from \$1500 to \$2500. Terry Stone motioned to approve the amended bylaws. Bobby Furst seconded the motion. All in favor. No objections were heard.

**To Do:** Amended & Approved bylaws will be posted on MMNA website. **Done ✓**

## 8. Comments from Members, maximum of 3 minutes each – Bill Gilman

No comments were made as they were made throughout the meeting.

## 9. Election of Officers 2022-2023 Term – Bill Gilman

Bill Gilman (current MMNA President) informed everyone that he will not be seeking re-election this year. In addition, Vice President position is vacant. All other board members are seeking re-election. Bill asked that if anyone wished to run or nominate someone else to run, if so announce name in-person or send a Chat message to Dan on Zoom. No one responded.

- Mark Wheeler, President
- Terry Stone, Vice President
- Dan Stork, Treasurer
- Linda Doyle, Secretary
- Geary Hund, Roads Director

Linda Doyle motioned for Mark Wheeler and Terry Stone to be elected and all current board members to be re-elected. Bill Gilman seconded the motion. All in favor. No one opposed. **The above were elected for 2022-2023.**

**To Do:** Mark Wheeler will be added to MMNA bank accounts with signing authority. **Done ✓**

### Post meeting additions:

1. Bank account - In accordance with bylaws, we need to remove Bill Gilman and Ron Bastrup (previous VP who resigned mid-year) as signatories, and add Mark Wheeler and Terry Stone.

**To Do:** This is done at the bank, with an appointment. Mark Wheeler and Terry Stone will have to go with Dan Stork to US Bank in Yucca Valley in person and must bring their photo IDs. Dan Stork must bring a signed copy of the minutes from the March 19, 2022 General Annual Meeting showing the approved change of officers. **Done ✓**

**To Do:** Linda will send Dan Stork a copy of the minutes when available. **Done ✓**

### 2. PO Box key

**To Do:** Bill Gilman return key to the USPS PO Box at Joshua Tree Post Office to Dan Stork. **Done ✓**

**To Do:** A key to the MMNA PO Box will be given to Linda Doyle at the next board meeting. **Done ✓**

### 3. PO Box contact

**To Do:** Since Mark Wheeler plans to serve one year, Dan Stork will transfer the registration of the MMNA PO Box to himself. He has all the documentation and forms needed, but he will take a signed copy of the minutes from the March 19, 2022 General Annual Meeting showing the approved change of officers.

**To Do:** Linda Doyle will send Mark Wheeler and Dan Stork final signed copy of the annual meeting minutes. They will need to present these signed minutes to US Bank, Yucca Valley for authorization of new signatories. **Done ✓**

## 10. Announcements – Bill Gilman

- Maryanne Kelly asked on zoom if MMNA is now allowed to apply for a grant with our new tax status. The consensus was that if there was a grant available and someone wanted to write it that MMNA would be able to use the funds. Dan Stork later modified the minutes to state that MMNA is not grant-eligible.
- Dan Stork let everyone know that the Roads Drag needs a new location. The location needs a convenient turnaround. He asked if anyone would be willing to let us store the drag on their property. Needs entrance and exit with a wide turn. Because he drops it off and then needs to have access. It is approximately 5x5 feet in size. Circular drive or u-shaped drive please let us know. Bobby Furst asked if the drag could be stored on the island where MMNA stores dirt on Turtle Rd. Will Harner did not think it was a good idea because of possible theft/vandalism. The road drag needs to be on private property for its storage. Note: After the meeting Jack Perrodin has agreed to let the road drag be stored on his property on Rockingchair Rd. Thank you Jack and Gloria!
- Jesse Ditson asked us to remind everyone when we have another schedule road work party. Geary Hund indicated that he will let everyone in the neighborhood know for the next date.
- Bill Gilman would like to invite neighbors to come together and “walk the dirt roads together” as a way to meet each other.

**12. Adjourn** - With no further business, annual meeting was adjourned at 5:46pm.

*Linda Doyle*

*MMNA secretary*